

aWest Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2015

Attendees: Amal Ali, Jeff Bersin, Joanna Curry-Sartori, Cyndi Brown, Kevonice (Conard student), Jahmal, Jackie Colon, Dan Jordan, Joe Kalache, Leo Negrón, Helen Droган

**Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures /
Announcements/Refreshments**

Approve minutes- motion to approve
Send off minutes

Announcements:

National Take Back Day initiative: Sept. 26 from 10 – 2 pm.

Helen explained that this is a national DEA event to collect prescription drugs from people in town. They do take back drugs but not “sharps” (needles and epi-pens). It’s a good way to clean out any meds from homes, even illegal drugs. They don’t ask questions. The medications are put in big barrels and DEA comes to take them away for incineration. Very successful in the past.

Promotions: Helen will put posters up around town in drug stores and newspapers and the Senior Centers.

Leo discussed our effort of locating a medication collection box in the lobby of the Police Department under recent State legislation. The main objections have been the need of two officers (a Detective and a Property Supervisor) to monitor the box, inventory contents, storage of the collected contents in Evidence Lockup and ultimate disposal of the medication.

Next Step: Helen will put Leo in touch with her contact from Bloomfield Police Department (where they currently have a drop box) to see if they can share what makes this possible in their town.

Helen asked why can’t we keep up with 2 x annual DEA program? Last minute money put back into this which was scheduled to end last year.

Helen asked Leo if Police carry Narcan, a medication used to reverse effects of opiates and narcotics. Leo stated that the Police don’t, but medics who work in town do.

Discussion continued about the Fire Department taking over paramedic services in town, which are currently contracted with AMR. The changeover was supposed to be in place by July 2015, but it was stated that it is now looking more like the end of the year. Eventually medical transport (ambulance service) may also move to the Fire Department.

Changing Minds 4 The Better

A conversation on mental health

September 17th, 2015 6:30 to 8:30 pm

University of Saint Joseph, Hoffman Auditorium

Community of Concern:

- Discussion: Jeff questioned whether the name Community Of Concern is still the correct direction and is it advisable to consider exploring a new name and a new way of inspiring and involving parents.
- Cyndi Brown, parent from Community of Concern, shared that there has been a significant change this year and she is getting lot of interest from parents that are interested in being a part of COC.

Cyndi shared that a focus on middle school parents is really where we need to be working. Hall and Conard are unified and working together as far as Community of Concern. They met over the summer and have talked to both principals. They plan on doing several programs this year about topics including risky behaviors, anxiety, depression, how handle social media, binge drinking, etc.

Plans for COC this year:

- 1) The Sullivans--- A husband and wife presenting team. Husband is a retired Patriots football player and he gives a talk about life pressures and direction his life has taken. His wife speaks of losing her daughter at age 17. PTOs have agreed to cover the cost of the program. Goal is to have this event during parent meeting week of October. Presenters want to come in and do student assemblies. If they can get it organized, this will happen this Fall or Spring.
 - 2) Kiss the Girls and Make Them Cry - A play that was presented this summer at Hall HS and at a festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. CoC will present the play to the parent community on October 6th at Hall.
 - 3) In Winter/Spring, they see a need to address depression and anxiety. Considering Geoff Genser as a speaker since town parents really enjoy his presentations. Possibly a panel discussion to talk about issues. Would like to bring in a doctor from CCMC as well as a Police representative.
 - 4) For Prom time arrange the car crash and LifeStar presentation at the High Schools.
 - 5) Coffeehouse -- considering how to frame a conversation with a clear purpose to spark a strong dialog between parents.
- Cyndi has five Conard freshman parents who are interested in getting involved. High School Open Houses are another opportunity to build support.
 - Cyndi shared information about the First Annual Summit on Digital Citizenship, Oct 3- at University of St. Joseph's (article in West Hartford Life). \$50.
 - Next Step: Jackie- send info to Cyndi to connect her with another parent who could join CoC. Troy Moore is a Bristow parent who has attended SAPC meetings and offered expertise in communications.
 - Next Step: Jeff will be passing the CoC checking account to Cyndi.

CoC- looking to expand focus--- social media, and other issues.

- Next Step: Could talk to other towns that have CoC or similar groups to coordinate efforts, and resources. Joe Kalache will reach out to CASAC for contact information.

Also CoC wants to tap senior parents (with kids going off to college) for another perspective.

Dan- LBE students would love to offer ideas to CoC.

- Next Step: Dan and Cyndi - coordinate connection.
- Next Step: Jeff talk with Cyndi re whether we continue with CoC name.

Kevonice (Conard student) shared that teens tell things to their friends rather than parents but teens don't have tools or skills to handle concerns well.

Jackie- more students are coming forward to get help with friends who are in trouble than have been in the past. She attributes this to their advisory program – small group sessions at the beginning of the high school day where they learn about being empowered and problem solving. As a result, more students come forward.

Leo-- spoke of students sharing concerns with friend- and hope their friends will talk about them to adults so they get the help they need. Need avenues to pursue.

Jeff shared that there used to be “D.A.R.T. Line” managed by the Police Department as a number you can call anonymously to share information about a party coming up that that you are concerned about. Leo will follow-up to determine if it’s still active and is promoted in any way.

Accomplishments:

Joanna (SAPC Coordinator from Bridge Family Center) provided context for the next focus of the meeting. In order to consider what our focus should be for the coming year (what would be most high leverage and impactful) we want to start by reviewing our accomplishments and purpose.

We listed accomplishments of the past few years together.

- Sobriety test
- Lead by example
- Community of concern
- Town hall meetings
- Student/parent panel
- Research of ICR
- Making of video (students)
- Letter re dealing with drugs
- Data collection/surveys
- Safe driving at NW catholic and Conard
- Speaker- David Greenville
- Talk on Internet addictions
- Visit of True Colors to the commission
- Speaker- basketball player at Hall
- Parent survey

SAPC Purpose: Read aloud

The West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission identifies and shares prevention and intervention resources for the benefit of all of its residents in order to raise awareness, reduce substance abuse, and promote a healthy life style through a caring community collaboration.

Needs in the community

We brainstormed what the needs are in the community with the hope that we choose our focus’ for the coming year in terms of what can best address these needs.

Needs listed included:

- School environment – students have shared in Lead by Example that this is a priority including addressing racism and sexism.

- Haves and have notes (especially for students)
- Violence and anger
- Parents and others not knowing who to go to for support
- Resources- getting the word out on what is available in town
- Communication- re what is happening in town.
- Wellness- prevention as well as the specific need to address issues like anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, etc.
- Binge drinking
- Admin at schools- students feel they prefer not to know so not need to deal.
- Teen and school admin relations – needs to be addressed
- Teens need adults with whom they can have a non-judging, healthy relationship.
- Elders- increased SI, Substance abuse, more STDs, prescription drug abuse.

Priority activities and projects- 2015

Each person wrote their ideas for priorities on sticky notes and then we shared with the group, clustering like ideas.

Student focus: Lead by Example

- Continue LBE in Conard and Hall
- Connect LBE to COC
- LBE- helps SAPC know what students really want and need

Parent focus: COC- support their efforts

- Parent/ child relations
- Admin and school/ student relations
- Events/activities (listed above)

SAPC: Function

- Networking---help connect people and groups making similar efforts in the community.
- Help people not reinvent the wheel.
- Communication: help get the word out on events and community resources
- Recruit more SAPC members from different sectors, make sure all sectors represented.

Presentations/ Events:

- Possibly co-sponsor events with other organizations.
- Address key issues such as:
 - Consequences of drinking
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Stress and coping strategies
 - Mindfulness strategies

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Curry-Sartori

September , 2015